

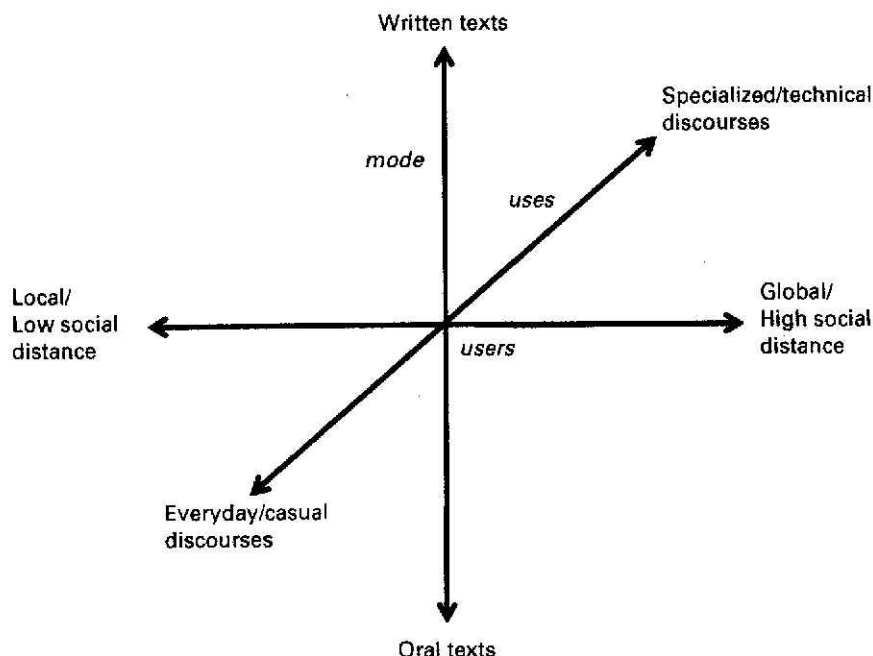


Figure A2.8 Mahboob's language variation framework (source: Mahboob in press)

Before moving on to either B2 or A3 (depending on how you are using this book), you may find it useful to look back over the various models of the spread of English that have been described in A2, rank/evaluate them, and decide which (if any) you find entirely satisfactory. If you don't think any of them is sufficiently comprehensive, you may even want to have a go at designing your own model!

STANDARD LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY IN THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD

A3

Standard language and language standards

Standard language and language standards are topics that excite an immense amount of controversy both inside and outside the linguistics profession. **Standard language** is the term used for the variety of a language that is considered to be the norm. It is the variety held up as the optimum for educational purposes and used as a yardstick against which other varieties of the language are measured. Being a **prestige variety**, a standard language is spoken by a minority of people within a society, typically those occupying positions of power. In other words, as Milroy (2001: 532) argues, "varieties of language do not actually have prestige in themselves: these varieties acquire prestige when their *speakers* have high prestige". Not surprisingly, then, as Mesthrie and

Bhatt (2008: 14–15) point out, “standard English has almost come to have a life and power of its own”, with the ideology of standardisation “presenting the standard as the primordial entity from which other dialects deviate” and, in turn, having “important ramifications for the status of new varieties of English that developed . . . beyond the south of England and beyond the British Isles”.

Language standards are the reverse side of the standard language coin. These are the prescriptive language rules which together constitute the standard, and to which all members of a language community are exposed and urged to conform during education, regardless of their local variety. Because a living language is by definition dynamic, these rules are subject to change over time. However, while any specific language change is in progress, it is seen as error by those who favour standard language ideology (general public and language professional alike), and is the subject of much criticism from self-appointed guardians of ‘correct’ usage, who tend to look back to a mythical linguistic ‘Golden Age’, often that of their own childhood. A good example of this phenomenon in respect of English is the Queen’s English Society, which was founded in 1972 and whose aims are “to improve standards of English, to encourage people to know more about our wonderful language, to use it more effectively and to enjoy it more”, as well as “exposing poor English standards” (see <http://queens-english-society.com/>). We will return to the Queen’s English Society in unit D3.

Because language standards seem not to function in the interests of certain groups, especially speakers of New Englishes, Parakrama argues that standards should be made more inclusive:

Language standards are rarely contested, even by those who are engaged in radical and far-reaching social critique. Yet, standards discriminate against those who don’t conform, and language standardisation has systematically worked against the underclass as well as women and minorities . . . The existence of standards, however objectionable, cannot be denied, so the only viable option, politically at any rate, is to work towards broadening the standard to include the greatest variety possible, particularly the ‘uneducated’ arenas of usage which have so far been considered inappropriate, mistaken, even pathological.

(Parakrama 1995: back cover)

Hudson (1996: 32) describes standard languages as “quite abnormal” in their development: “Whereas one thinks of normal language development as taking place in a rather haphazard way, largely below the threshold of consciousness of the speakers, standard languages are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society”. Following Haugen (1966) he summarises this process of intervention as going through four stages, selection, codification, elaboration of function, and acceptance.

Selection

This is the most critical stage in the standardising process. It refers to the way in which one variety rather than any other is chosen as the one that will be developed as the standard language. Often, this is an existing variety that already has political and/or economic currency. Modern standard English, for instance, derives from

Mercian, the East Midlands dialect favoured by the educated of London after the Royal Court was established there following the Norman Conquest, and the centre of power had thus moved away from Winchester and its West Saxon dialect (see Crystal 2003b: 29). On the other hand, the process could involve the selection of features from several varieties or even, as in the case of Classical Hebrew in Israel, of a language variety that has no native speakers. Selection is, of course, a social and political process since it is invariably led by those in power, and subsequently reinforces and further promotes their interests over those of speakers of other (by definition 'non-standard') varieties.

Codification

Once selection has taken place, the variety chosen to represent the standard has to be 'fixed' in grammar books and dictionaries so that those people who wish to use the language 'correctly' have access to its standard forms.

Elaboration of function

To fulfil its role, the standard variety has to be capable of performing a wide range of institutional and literary functions particularly, though not exclusively, in government, law, education, science, and literature. At the elaboration stage, then, new lexical items are added and new conventions developed to fill any gaps.

Acceptance

Clearly, unless the relevant population accept the selected variety as their standard and, most probably, their national language, all will have been in vain. In practice, though, since those who make the selection tend to be, or to represent, those who have the right of veto, acceptance is unlikely to be an issue. Those who already lacked political and economic power will continue to do so, with their inferior status in society now being symbolised by their use of an 'inferior' language variety: a social, regional, or ethnic dialect. For the time being, the standard variety, as Hudson (1996: 33) says, "serves as a strong unifying force for the state, as a symbol of its independence of other states . . . and as a marker of its difference from other states". On the other hand, it is quite possible that in times to come, there will be challenges to the 'accepted' variety from those both within and outside its users. This is currently the situation with English, as the next two sections will demonstrate.

Finally, as Milroy and Milroy (2012: 23) note, "these hypothetical stages [of standardisation] do not necessarily follow one another in temporal succession". Some stages may overlap or precede others earlier in the sequence. In addition, while Haugen's description could be taken to imply that the standardisation process has an end point, this is not so. The on-going nature of the process is most obvious in relation to codification and elaboration, with frequent elaboration of a language in line with its users' new needs (e.g. technological vocabulary) leading to further codification. In respect of English, Oxford Dictionaries adds approximately 150 million words a month to its central database of English usage examples, and of these, around 1000 are added to Oxford Dictionaries Online (a web-based lexicon of current English) each year. For example, in 2013 the word 'omnishambles' (from 'omni' meaning 'all' and 'shambles' meaning 'confusion' or 'mess') was added, having been coined in 2009 for a television

comedy programme and repeated by the British leader of the Opposition in response to the Government's 2012 budget, while the word 'selfie' (a photograph taken by/of oneself) was declared Britain's word of 2013.

What is standard English?

Standard English is by no means an easy language variety to identify. In the case of languages such as French and Italian, for which academies prescribe the forms that may and may not be codified in their grammars and dictionaries, the standard is evident. Even those people who do not themselves wish to promote it are able, year on year, to ascertain exactly what it is. All is less certain with standard English, not only in terms of its worldwide use (which is the subject of the following section) but also in its Inner Circle contexts.

The following are some of the main definitions of standard English that have been proposed in recent years. They are listed in chronological order of their first appearance in print, although as you will see, those that appear in later editions of the same publication have often not altered. The first, third, and sixth refer specifically to British English whereas the remaining four appear to include all Inner Circle Englishes.

1. The dialect of educated people throughout the British Isles. It is the dialect normally used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities, and heard on radio and television (Hughes and Trudgill 1979, repeated in the second edition, 1996).
2. The variety of the English language which is normally employed in writing and normally spoken by 'educated' speakers of the language. It is also, of course, the variety of the language that students of English as a Foreign or Second Language (EFL/ESL) are taught when receiving formal instruction. The term *Standard English* refers to grammar and vocabulary (*dialect*) but not to pronunciation (*accent*). (Trudgill and Hannah 1982, and repeated in the fourth edition, 2002).
3. Standard English can be characterized by saying that it is that set of grammatical and lexical forms which is typically used in speech and writing by educated native speakers. It . . . includes the use of colloquial and slang vocabulary as well as swear-words and taboo expressions (Trudgill 1984).
4. [The term] 'Standard English' is potentially misleading for at least two reasons. First, in order to be self-explanatory, it really ought to be called 'the grammar and the core vocabulary of educated usage in English'. That would make plain the fact that it is not the whole of English, and above all, it is not pronunciation that can in any way be labelled 'Standard', but only one part of English: its grammar and vocabulary (Strevens 1985).
5. Since the 1980s, the notion of 'standard' has come to the fore in public debate about the English language . . . We may define the Standard English of an English-speaking country as a minority variety (identified chiefly by its vocabulary, grammar and orthography) which carries most prestige and is most widely understood. (Crystal 1995, repeated in the second edition, 2003b).
6. Traditionally the medium of the upper and (especially professional) middle class, and by and large of education . . . Although not limited to one accent (most

notably in recent decades), it has been associated since at least the nineteenth century with the accent that, since the 1920s, has been called *Received Pronunciation* (RP), and with the phrases *the Queen's English*, *the King's English*, *Oxford English*, and *BBC English* (McArthur 2002).

7. The kind of English in which all native speakers learn to read and write although most do not actually speak it (Trudgill and Hannah fifth edition, 2008).

These definitions bear certain similarities. For instance, there is a fair degree of consensus that accent is not involved in standard English, although as McArthur implies, the British general public associate the 'standard' with an RP accent. There is also general agreement that standard English is primarily a case of grammar and vocabulary, and that it is the variety promoted through the education system and, in some definitions, that it is associated with social class. Nevertheless, this does not help us to any great extent if we want to know what it all means in practice. Possibly the best source of information in this respect is an article by Trudgill, the originator of four of the above definitions. In 'Standard English: what it isn't' (1999), Trudgill demonstrates what may be the only feasible way of defining a 'non-academy' standard language such as English. That is, by what it is not:

- ☐ It is not a language: it is only one variety of a given English.
- ☐ It is not an accent: in Britain it is spoken by 12–15 per cent of the population, of whom 9–12 per cent speak it with a regional accent.
- ☐ It is not a **style**: it can be spoken in formal, neutral and informal styles, respectively:

Father was exceedingly fatigued subsequent to his extensive peregrinations.

Dad was very tired after his lengthy journey.

The old man was bloody knackered after his long trip.

- ☐ It is not a **register**: given that a register is largely a matter of lexis in relation to subject matter (e.g. the register of medicine, of cricket, or of knitting), there is no necessary connection between register and Standard English. Trudgill (1999: 122) provides this example: "There was two eskers what we saw in them U-shaped valleys" to demonstrate "a non-standard English sentence couched in the technical register of physical geography".
- ☐ It is not a set of prescriptive rules: it can tolerate certain features which, because many of their rules are grounded in Latin, prescriptive grammarians do not allow. Trudgill (1999: 125) provides these examples: sentence-final prepositions as in "I've bought a new car which I'm very pleased with", and constructions such as "It's me", "He is taller than me".

Trudgill concludes that standard English is a dialect that differs from the other dialects of English in that it has greater prestige, does not have an associated accent, and does not form part of a geographical continuum. In other words, it is purely a **social dialect**. He goes on to point out that while standard English has many features in common with the other dialects of the country in question, there are certain

differences and that these differences do not necessarily indicate the linguistic superiority of the standard forms.

Non-standard Englishes

It is not unusual for all the regional native speaker dialects of English to be lumped together with all the New Englishes (in both standard and non-standard versions) under the label **non-standard**, with the implication that all are inferior. Somewhat surprisingly, even educated Australian English belonged until recently to this category, only joining the ranks of standard English in the 1970s. Up to then, Australian English was evaluated in terms of its closeness to Standard British English (known locally as 'colonial cringe'), with any distinctively Australian forms being regarded as 'bad' English. The first dictionary of Australian English to be edited within Australia's shores rather than in Britain was only published in 1976. Since then, educated Australians have developed a new confidence in their own identity which has translated linguistically into the celebration of their own ways of speaking and a new reluctance to look back to their British roots and mimic Standard British English.

If it was so difficult for a standard native variety of English to gain acceptance, it should be no surprise that non-standard native varieties and both standard and non-standard non-native varieties have not so far met with similar success. In the case of the non-standard native varieties, lack of acceptance appears to have connections with attitudes towards race in the US and class in the UK. In her discussion of standard American and British English, Milroy argues that people find it easier to identify the non-standard than the standard. She goes on to propose that:

in a sense, the standard [American English] of popular perception is what is left behind when all the non-standard varieties spoken by disparaged persons such as Valley Girls, Hillbillies, Southerners, New Yorkers, African Americans, Asians, Mexican Americans, Cubans and Puerto Ricans are set aside. In Britain, where consciousness of the special status of RP as a class accent is acute, spoken standard English might similarly be described as what is left after we remove from the linguistic bran-tub Estuary English, Brummie, Cockney, Geordie, Scouse, various quaint rural dialects, London Jamaican, transatlantic slang and perhaps even conservative RP as spoken by older members of the upper classes.

(L. Milroy 1999: 174)

While we are on the subject of non-standard Englishes, it is important to note that the New Englishes, in both their standard and non-standard manifestations, tend to be regarded in much the same way as the non-standard Inner Circle varieties. Thus, despite having undergone the processes of standardisation and been codified in grammars and dictionaries, Outer Circle Englishes such as Standard Singapore English and Standard Indian English are still considered non-standard, particularly by outsiders but even by some of their own speakers.

Meanwhile, in several parts of the world including a number of African-English-speaking countries, standardisation processes are currently underway. But again, if and when this has been achieved, they are still unlikely to attract the same prestige as their standard British, American, and Australian counterparts. This is because of

attitudes towards non-native varieties of English, implicit in which is the belief that the New Englishes are the result of a process known as **fossilization**. In other words, the learning of English is said to have ceased (or 'fossilized') some way short of target-like competence, with the target being assumed to be either Standard British or Standard American English. Of course, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the idea that the New Englishes should have as their target the standard Englishes of the Inner Circle is of dubious validity. We will return to these issues in strands 4 and 7.

VARIATION ACROSS POSTCOLONIAL ENGLISHES

A4

Outer and Inner Circle Englishes

British English apart, all the other Englishes whether Inner or Outer Circle resulted from one of two diasporas: the first diaspora in the case of the Inner Circle Englishes and the second diaspora in the case of the Outer. Note, though, that the two diasporas overlapped in time, with, for example, the Indian English of the second diaspora preceding the Australian English of the first. The two are sometimes known, respectively as 'new' and 'New' Englishes, though I have not followed the convention in this third edition. The former group, members of the Inner Circle, consists primarily of North America (the US and Canada), Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The Englishes in these territories developed independently of, and differently from, English in Britain partly because of the original mixtures of dialects and accents among the people who settled in these areas, and partly because of the influence of the languages of the indigenous populations. Nevertheless, because of their direct descent from British English, and because they were spoken as mother tongues, there is a strong element of continuity in the use of these Englishes from pre-colonial days.

On the other hand, the Englishes of the second diaspora, members of the Outer Circle, were and for the most part still are learnt as second languages or as one language within a wider multilingual repertoire of acquisition. This group includes, for example, Indian English, Philippine English, Nigerian English, and Singapore English (the latter increasingly being spoken as a mother tongue). Strand 4 will not be concerned with the kinds of English used by people from the Expanding Circle such as mainland Europe, China, Japan, Korea etc., and Latin America as we will explore their use of English in strand 6 when we consider English as a *Lingua Franca*.

In strand 3 we tackled the complex issue of standard English in respect of the Inner Circle Englishes. This is not in any way intended to suggest that the Outer Circle varieties should be approached in terms of their differences from a particular native variety rather than in their own right. This point is generally accepted nowadays in terms of the first diaspora Englishes, particularly American English, which is considered in the popular mind and among many English language professionals to be one of the world's two prestige varieties of English (the other being British English). On the other hand, as was noted in A3, Australian English has only fairly recently begun to lose the negative connotations attached to its differences from British

English. And the situation has not improved even to this extent for many of the Englishes of the Outer Circle, particularly those that have not yet been fully described and codified (see A3 for a discussion of the processes involved in standardisation).

Defining a postcolonial English

There are a large number of varieties of postcolonial English and these are far from uniform in their characteristics and current use. They nevertheless share certain features. According to Platt, Weber and Ho (1984: 2–3), a postcolonial English (or a 'New English' as they call it) fulfils the following four criteria:

1. It has developed through the education system. This means that it has been taught as a subject and, in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction in regions where languages other than English were the main languages.
2. It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was *not* the language spoken by most of the population.
3. It is used for a range of functions *among* those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.
4. It has become 'localised' or '**nativised**' by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words, and expressions.

Another way of looking at a postcolonial English is to consider the status of its norms, and the extent to which its innovative uses of the language are accepted despite their differences from native English norms. Bamgbose (1998: 3–4) outlines five internal factors that can be used to decide on the status of an innovation in English:

1. *the demographic factor*: how many speakers of the acrolect, or standard variety, use it?
2. *the geographical factor*: how widely dispersed is it?
3. *the authoritative factor*: where is its use sanctioned?
4. *codification*: does it appear in reference books such as dictionaries and grammars?
5. *the acceptability factor*: what is the attitude of users and non-users towards it?

Bamgbose points out that of these five, codification and acceptability are the most crucial as, without them, any innovation will be regarded as an error rather than as a legitimate form characteristic of a particular postcolonial variety.

English was initially spoken in Africa and Asia only by the native English-speaking colonisers from Britain and North America. They set up schools to teach first English, and then other subjects through English, in order to provide a local workforce able to communicate in the language. As time went on, and the number of students increased, the English-medium schools began to recruit local non-native teachers. Their English was, inevitably, different from that of their own native speaker teachers and the differences grew still more marked among the children who were taught by non-native speakers. Students were thus exposed to the language for several years during which time they used it for an ever-increasing number of functions. In this way, the postcolonial Englishes evolved into varieties that served a wide or even full range of purposes and, at the same time, developed their own character.

Levels of variation

The main levels on which the Englishes of the two diasporas differ from the English of what Chinua Achebe has described as “its ancestral home”, i.e. Britain, and from each other, are the following: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary/idiom, and discourse style. Although you should bear in mind that the different varieties of these Englishes are not internally uniform, nevertheless, as with British English, in the vast majority of cases there is sufficient common ground for us to be able to talk about a particular national English, be it Nigerian English, Indian English, American English, or whatever. The following details draw mainly on Platt et al. (1984), supplemented where appropriate with more recent examples and commentary from Kachru and Nelson (2006), Kachru and Smith (2008), Melchers and Shaw (2011), and Trudgill and Hannah (2008).

Pronunciation

Consonant sounds

The dental fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/ as in the words *thin* and *this* when spoken with a British English **Received Pronunciation** (RP) accent (with the tongue tip vibrating against the upper teeth), are pronounced in various ways by speakers of postcolonial Englishes. For example, speakers of Indian and West Indian Englishes use instead the sounds /t/ and /d/, so that these words are pronounced ‘tin’ and ‘dis’.

On the other hand, speakers of Lankan, Malaysian, Singapore, and many African Englishes often use the sounds /tθ/ and /dð/, so that the same words sound closer to ‘t-thin’ and ‘d-this’. These substitutions would have started life as attempts to produce the perceived ‘correct’ L1 English sound. However once L2-English-speaking teachers began to be employed, the substitutions would have been produced as classroom models and imitated by pupils. Over time, they gradually became regarded as local variants, rather than incorrect attempts to conform, and in many cases are now in the process of being codified.

The same is true of a host of other consonant sounds of which the following are among those most frequently described:

- /w/ is pronounced as /v/ in Lankan and some Indian Englishes so that ‘wet’ sounds like ‘vet’.
- The voiceless sounds /p/, /t/, and /k/ are pronounced at the beginnings of words without **aspiration** (a small puff of air) by speakers of Indian, Philippine, Malaysian, and some other postcolonial Englishes, so that they sound to Inner Circle speakers more like their voiced equivalents, /b/, /d/, and /g/ (e.g. the words ‘pin’, ‘tin’, and ‘cap’ sound closer to ‘bin’, ‘din’, and ‘gap’).
- Consonants at the ends of words tend to be unreleased or replaced with glottal stops in Englishes such as Ghanaian, West Indian, and colloquial Singaporean, so that a word such as ‘cat’ may be pronounced either *ca(t)* with an unreleased final consonant, or *ca*’ with a final glottal stop. The word-final **glottal stop** to replace a consonant sound, especially /t/, is also, of course, a feature of some non-standard varieties of British English such as Estuary English and Cockney.

- ❑ Several postcolonial Englishes, including Indian, West African, and Papua New Guinean, use **voiceless** word-final consonants (that is, without vibration of the vocal cords) where RP would have a **voiced** one. Words such as 'feed', 'gave', and 'rob' may thus sound to an outsider as if they end in the consonants -t, -f, and -p, that is, as 'feet', 'gafe' and 'rop'.
- ❑ Clear and dark 'l' (as in 'lip' and 'pill') are not distinguished in most varieties.

Finally, there are two consonant features which occur less widely among these Englishes, although, as you will see in A6, they feature in some of the Englishes of the Expanding Circle:

- ❑ there is a lack of distinction between /r/ and /l/ in Hong Kong, Singapore (of Chinese origin), and some East African Englishes (including Ngũgĩ's mother tongue, Gikũyũ), so that words such as 'red' and 'led' are interchangeable.
- ❑ /ʃ/ is pronounced /s/ by speakers of some East African Englishes, and some (generally less well-educated) speakers of Hong Kong English, so that 'ship' sounds like 'sip'.

Vowel sounds

Vowel sounds vary across the postcolonial Englishes in terms of both their quality and their quantity (i.e. length); in other words, according to how high/low and forward/back the tongue is in the mouth, and the degree to which the lips are rounded or spread (these factors all relate to **vowel quality**), and to how long the sound is actually maintained (this factor relates to **vowel quantity**). Some of the main differences in vowel sounds across the New Englishes are as follows:

- ❑ Many postcolonial Englishes, e.g. Singapore, Indian, and African Englishes, distinguish only minimally if at all between the short and long vowels /ɪ/ and /i:/ as in the RP pronunciation of the words 'sit' and 'seat', tending to pronounce both as /ɪ/. The same is often true of the sounds /ɒ/ and /u:/.
- ❑ Many postcolonial Englishes, e.g. Lankan, Singapore, Indian, Philippine, and Jamaican, pronounce RP /ɑ:/ without length, so that the word 'staff', for example, sounds closer to 'stuff' to an outsider.
- ❑ African Englishes tend to produce the **schwa** sound /ə/ as the full vowel [a] at the ends of words, so that 'matter' is pronounced [mata] where RP would be [matə].
- ❑ Diphthongs have a tendency to be pronounced both shorter and as monophthongs in several postcolonial Englishes including Indian, Lankan, Malaysian, and African. For example, the diphthong /eɪ/ in the RP pronunciation of the word 'take' loses its second element, to become [e'] or the shorter [e] so that it sounds closer to 'tek'. Similarly, in Lankan English the diphthong /əʊ/ in the word 'coat' tends to be pronounced either [o:] (by more educated speakers) or [ɔ] (by less educated) so that, especially in the latter case, it sounds similar to RP 'cot'.
- ❑ The majority of New English varieties are **syllable-timed** (with *all* syllables occurring at regular intervals of time) rather than **stress-timed** (with *stressed* syllables falling at fairly regular intervals), and as Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 129) point out, "for these varieties vowel reduction is not as common as in RP and in some of them [ə] is rare".

Grammar

Platt et al. (1984: chapter 4) sum up the main grammatical tendencies of the post-colonial Englishes in referring to people, things and ideas as follows:

- ☐ a tendency not to mark nouns for plural
- ☐ a tendency to use a specific/non-specific system for nouns rather than a definite/indefinite system, or to use the two systems side by side
- ☐ a tendency to change the form of quantifiers
- ☐ a tendency not to make a distinction between the third person pronouns *he* and *she*
- ☐ a tendency to change the word order within the noun phrase.

The following is a selection from the many examples that Platt et al. (1984) cite for the five categories listed above. In each case, consider what the standard British/American English equivalent would be.

- ☐ non-marking of plural forms:
 - up to twelve *year* of schooling (India)
 - and they know all four *dialect* (Jamaica)
 - Pilipino is only one of the *subject* (Philippines)
- ☐ specific/non-specific system:

Everyone has <i>car</i> (India)	}	non-specific
I'm not on <i>scholarship</i> (East Africa)		
I'm staying in <i>one</i> house with three other (Indian)	}	specific
There! Here got <i>one</i> stall selling soup noodles (Singapore)		
- ☐ quantifiers:
 - Don't eat so *much* sweets (Singapore)
 - Some few* fishermen may be seen (West Africa)
 - I applied *couple of* places in Australia (India)
- ☐ Pronouns:
 - When I first met my husband, *she* was a student (East Africa)
 - My mother, *he* live in kampong (Malaysia; a 'kampong' is a small settlement)
- ☐ Word order:
 - A *two-hour* exciting display (Ghana)
 - Dis *two last* years (Papua New Guinea)
 - Ninety over* cheques (Singapore/Malaysia)

Moving on to verbs, these are the main tendencies that Platt et al. (1984: chapter 5) observe in many postcolonial Englishes:

- ☐ limited marking of the third person singular present tense form:
 - She *drink* milk (Philippines)
 - Every microcosm *consist* of many cells (India)

Table A4.1 Question tags used in outer-circle varieties (source: Melchers and Shaw 2011: 140)

Tag	Countries used according to Platt et al. (1984) and Schmied (1991)
<i>no?</i>	India, Sri Lanka
<i>isn't it?</i>	India, Sri Lanka, Singapore/Malaysia, East and West Africa
<i>not so?</i>	East and West Africa
<i>is it?</i>	Singapore/Malaysia

- ❑ limited marking of verbs for the past tense:
 - Mandarin, I *learn* it privately (Hong Kong)
 - My wife she *pass* her Cambridge (Singapore)
- ❑ tendency to use an aspect system (which shows whether an action is finished or still going on) rather than a tense system (which shows the time an action takes place):
 - I *still* eat (= I am/was eating in Malaysian English)
 - I *have worked* there in 1960 (with use of has/have + past participle to indicate a time in the past in Indian English)
- ❑ a tendency to extend the use of be + verb + ing constructions to stative verbs, e.g.:
 - She *is knowing* her science very well (East African English)
 - Mohan *is having* two houses (Indian English)
- ❑ the formation of different phrasal and prepositional verb constructions:
 - Her name *cropped* in the conversation (East African English)
 - I'm going to *voice out* my opinion (West African English)

Finally, a feature common to many of the postcolonial Englishes is the use of a general or undifferentiated question tag form where Inner Circle Englishes would repeat the tense and subject of the preceding statement in their tags. For example, an Inner Circle speaker would say "Harriet will be home soon, won't she?", whereas a speaker of Lankan might say (as my Sri Lankan neighbour actually did) "Harriet will be home soon, isn't it?". Melchers and Shaw conveniently summarise the various alternatives in Table A4.1.

As Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 133) point out, "these undifferentiated tags play an important pragmatic role . . . exhibiting how linguistic form is constrained by cultural constraints of politeness". The general tag, they note, is seen as "non-impositional and mitigating" whereas the canonical tag (the Inner Circle type) is seen as "assertive".

Vocabulary/idiom

There are several respects in which we could study postcolonial English vocabulary, but we will focus on locally coined words/expressions, borrowings from indigenous languages, and idioms.

Locally coined words/expressions

Coinages most commonly arise in one of two ways: by the addition of a prefix or suffix to an existing (British or indigenous) word, and by compounding, where a local concept is compounded from English items.

Examples of the first kind of coinage are:

stingko	colloquial Singapore English: 'smelly'
spacy	Indian English: 'spacious'
heaty	Singapore/Malaysian English for foods which make the body hot, e.g. the stingko fruit, durian.
teacheress	Indian English: 'female teacher'
jeepney	Philippine English: 'a small bus' (army jeeps having been converted to buses)
enstool	Ghanaian English: 'to install a chief'
destool	Ghanaian English: 'to depose a chief'

Examples of the second kind of coinage are:

peelhead	Jamaican English: 'a bald-headed person'
bushmeat	West African English: 'game'
dry coffee	East African English: 'coffee without milk and sugar'
chewing stick	African English: 'twig chewed at one end to clean one's teeth'
key-bunch	Indian English: 'bunch of keys'
dining leaf	Indian English: 'banana, lotus or other leaf used as a plate'
basket-woman	Lankan English: 'coarsely behaved woman'
high hat	Philippine English: 'a snob'

Borrowings from indigenous languages:

East African English:

chai	'tea'
duka	'shop'
manamba	'labourer'

Indian English:

bandh	'a total strike in an area'
crore	'ten million'
swadeshi	'indigenous, native, home-grown'

Philippine English:

boondock	'mountain'
kundiman	'love song'

Idioms

Platt et al. (1984) distinguish between learners' unsuccessful attempts to use the idioms of native speakers of English, and stabilised postcolonial idioms. They discount the first kind altogether, a policy with which you might or might not agree. However, they cite examples such as Singapore English 'gift of the gap' (for British English 'gift of the gab') and 'in lips and bounce' (for 'in leaps and bounds'), where the variation from the native speaker version is regular on account of pronunciation differences.

Some postcolonial idioms are direct translations from indigenous idioms. For example, Singapore and Malaysian English 'to shake legs' comes from the Malay idiom 'goyang kaki', meaning 'to be idle'. Some are based on native speaker English, e.g. the East African idiom 'to be on the tarmac', meaning 'to be in the process of seeking a new job'. Others combine elements from English with indigenous forms, e.g. the Nigerian 'to put sand in someone's gari', means 'to threaten someone's livelihood' ('gari' being a type of flour). Still other idioms are variations on native speaker ones. For example, the British English idiom 'to have your cake and eat it' becomes, in Singapore English, rather more effectively I would argue, 'to eat your cake and have it'. Presumably this began life as an unsuccessful attempt at the 'correct' British version and gradually became common Singapore usage. Another example from Singapore English is 'to be in hot soup', which has the same meaning as, and blends, the two British English idioms, 'to be in hot water' and 'to be in the soup' (i.e. to be in trouble). This highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between creativity and incorrectness. But it is important to bear in mind that most linguistic innovation begins life as something that is considered an error in the standard form in whichever Circle of English. And the difficulty, as we will see in strand 6, is even greater in relation to the Expanding Circle Englishes.

Discourse style

A feature of several postcolonial Englishes is that they have a more formal character than Inner Circle Englishes. In particular, their vocabulary and grammatical structure are more complex. Indian English, in particular, favours "lengthy constructions, bookish vocabulary and exaggerated forms which make even a formal style appear 'more formal' to a speaker of another variety of English" (Platt et al. 1984: 149). Formality is, of course, a relative construct and, as the previous quotation implies, the language will only seem "bookish" and "exaggerated" to those who habitually use different forms.

Some Indian English stylistic features are logical extensions of British English strategies. For example, 'could' and 'would' are used in Indian English where British English uses 'can' and 'will', as in 'We hope that you could join us' or 'We hope that the Vice-Chancellor would investigate this matter' (Trudgill & Hannah 2008: 136). In both these cases, the past tense is used because it is felt to be more tentative and therefore more polite. The same strategy is regularly employed in British English. For example, in an instruction to a non-intimate, if the speaker wishes to appear more polite, he or she is likely to say 'Could you open the door' rather than 'Can you open the door'.

On the other hand, both Indian and African Englishes use a discourse style which cannot be found in Inner Circle Englishes, and here the indigenous culture is at least in part an influence. For example, certain aspects of Indian culture lead to expressions

of thanks, deferential vocabulary, and the use of blessings which would seem redundant or overdone to a speaker of an Inner Circle English: 'I am bubbling with zeal and enthusiasm to serve as a research assistant', or 'I offer myself as a candidate for the post of Research Assistant. Thanking you' (Platt et al. 1984: 150–151).

Another area where postcolonial Englishes differ from those of the Inner Circle is that of greeting and leave-taking. In postcolonial Englishes, these are often direct translations from the indigenous language. Some examples of greetings are:

Lankan English:	So how? (translation from Sinhala)
Nigerian English:	You're enjoying? (translation from Yoruba)
Singaporean/Malaysian English:	Have you eaten already?
West African English:	How? How now?
East African English:	Are you all right?

and of leavetakings:

Lankan English:	I'll go and come
Singaporean/Malaysian English:	Walk slowly hol

Finally, as is demonstrated by some of the preceding examples, the phenomenon of **code-mixing/code-switching** (using words, phrases, and longer stretches of speech in two or more languages) is characteristic of the speech of bi- and multilingual people. We will return to this phenomenon in unit B7.

PIDGIN AND CREOLE LANGUAGES

A5

Definitions and development

In an article describing the development of English during the colonial period, Leith (1996) identifies three types of English colony:

In the first type, exemplified by America and Australia, substantial settlement by first-language speakers of English displaced the precolonial population. In the second, typified by Nigeria, sparser colonial settlements maintained the precolonial population in subjection and allowed a proportion of them access to learning English as a second or additional language. There is yet a third type, exemplified by the **Caribbean** islands of Barbados and Jamaica. Here, a precolonial population was *replaced* by new labour from elsewhere, principally West Africa.

(Leith 1996: 181–182)

The first two types of English colony were the theme of A1. In A5 and the rest of strand 5, we move on to look at the third type, whose linguistic consequences, as Leith points out, are the most complex of all: pidgins and creoles.